

felt the same way and for exactly the same reason.

However, in the first few days of September 1961 the Soviets broke the moratorium by exploding a hydrogen bomb or two. Then he sent for me. He asked me to prepare a brief report on the consequences of the testing, indicating that he had a divergence of opinion between the AEC, on the one hand, and the State Department on the other as to the course of action that the United States should take. I spent about two weeks preparing such a report. When I called on him to submit it, it was then that he approached me and asked me to become Director of Central Intelligence.

F: You had at this time a discredited agency, in one sense, with the Bay of Pigs problem?

M: Yes. It had come under very serious public criticism--more so I think than it deserved, although I think it was entitled to its full share of criticism. I think President Kennedy expressed the situation very accurately when he said, "There is room in this matter for criticism for everybody. The CIA must not be asked to accept all of the criticism." This was a very broad position for the President to take. He took it.

The organization, CIA, was suffering from the criticism. Morale was pretty well shattered. It was somewhat similar to the morale in the AEC when I took over after the years of difficulty with the Joint Committee because of the problems between Lewis Strauss and the members of the committee I've mentioned. So my first problem was to try and rebuild a confidence. It wasn't very hard to do because that's such an extremely competent organization.

F: Being Director of the CIA also meant that you were Director of the U.S. Intelligence Board.

M: Yes. President Kennedy's letter to me asked me to assume the directorship

of the Central Intelligence Agency and a responsibility over the entire intelligence community. I sat as chairman of the United States Intelligence Board. My first act was to put my deputy, as the representative of the Central Intelligence Agency on the Intelligence Board, so I could sit and so far as possible remove myself from the agency and represent the President as chairman of the board, which is the way it should be. There are some people that claim that it's impossible for a person to wear two hats like that. Of course, you know the argument about the Joint Chiefs, whether they can act as Chief of Staff of their respective Services, and then objectively view the totality of the Defense establishment as a member of the Joint Chiefs. But I did my best to wear the two hats, and the records will show that on any number of occasions I reversed the position of the representative of the Central Intelligence Agency on the United States Intelligence Board.

F: At the time of your nomination to the directorship there was some criticism in the liberal press that you would not recognize sufficiently that the CIA is a branch of the government, and is not sort of a semi-autonomous agency. Anything justifiable in that criticism?

M: I know that there was some criticism. I think the criticism was not only the liberal press but some of the liberal members of the Congress. Whether justified or not, I don't know. There were fifteen members of the Senate that voted against my confirmation for differing reasons--some of them because they thought I was too stiff-necked in my views on the threat of Communism and for that reason my estimates and evaluations might be slanted.

But most of the votes were internal to the Senate itself who were criticizing the lack of control on the part of the Senate over the Central

Intelligence Agency. I thought it was quite significant that Senator Fulbright who voted against me, in doing so made a speech on the floor of the Senate that he would very probably vote to confirm me as Secretary of State but he wouldn't vote for me as Director of Central Intelligence because what he was doing was moving against the manner in which the Senate handled its control of the CIA. I had taken the position that that was a matter of concern in the Senate and for them to lay down the ground rules and I would abide by them, whatever they were.

F: What sort of controls are exerted on the CIA? This is something that people talk about with very little knowledge.

M: Well, there has been a good deal written on it. The Senate had a small select committee, representatives of the Armed Services Committee and the Finance Committee. There were four or five of them, and chaired by Senator Russell in my day. The House had a similar committee from the Armed Forces Committee and the Appropriations Committee, chaired by Mr. Vinson in my day. We would meet with them quite frequently and review our programs, and be guided by their judgment on a great many matters. I would consult individually with both Mr. Vinson and Mr. Russell on matters which I felt they should be informed on.

Now the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House were not represented on those committees. Senator Fulbright resented that very much. Congressman Morgan, chairman of the House committee, didn't express himself as violently as Senator Fulbright did. Since then, after I left, those committees have been expanded a little bit is my understanding; and two members of the Foreign Relations Committee sit on that committee, and two members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee sit on that committee on the House side. So there's

adequate control in my opinion.

F: Is it possible for the CIA to engage in some sort of clandestine operation without the approval of either the National Security Council or the Executive Branch?

M: No, it is not--under the controls that existed during my time.

F: In other words, you do not have an independent situation in which the CIA can make its own policy?

M: At no time. The Executive Branch of the government--represented by a representative of the White House and the State Department, Defense Department, and the CIA--discussed and reviewed all operational matters.

F: If you were getting into some sort of operation, you would always coordinate with State and Defense?

M: Yes, that was always done.

F: So that you would, then, deny the charge that the CIA is another U.S. government operating abroad?

M: Certainly, as far as during my time, and I'm sure since, this is a charge that can be honestly denied.

F: You, of course, very quickly got caught up in the--well, within a year--got caught up in the Cuban missile crisis. You had the problem there of intelligence, which I judge you had some difficulty at first getting anyone to believe--that missiles were being set up in Cuba.

M: Yes. That's a long story. I was persuaded myself that there was a danger that the Soviets might be tempted to put some missiles in Cuba. The majority opinion in the intelligence community, as well as State and Defense, was that this would be so out of character with the Soviets that they would not do so. They had never placed an offensive missile outside the Soviet's own territory. They had never placed an offensive missile

in any satellite area. I pointed out that Cuba was the only piece of real estate that they had indirect control of where a missile could reach Washington or New York and not reach Moscow. So the situation was somewhat different.

Furthermore, the bulk of opinion was that what we were witnessing in the build-up in the summer of 1962 was purely defensive--the location of surface-to-air missiles such as the Egyptians are now putting along the Suez. I was not persuaded about that because Cuba, being an island, such a defensive mechanism could be destroyed momentarily by low flying airplanes that could come in under radar, and with a very few well directed rockets could destroy the very intricate radar control mechanism of a surface-to-air missile site.

I reasoned that they were putting the surface-to-air missiles in as a means of stopping our U-2 surveillance. Once they did that, then we wouldn't know what went on in the interior of Cuba, and they could safely put in some missiles. This was exactly what they planned to do. They got a little out of phase, and they didn't get their surface-to-air missile sites all operating before their offensive missiles began to arrive, and that's how we discovered it. Fortunately we did.

F: Did you have much trouble persuading the National Security Council that there were missiles there?

M: Yes, I did, for the reason that the intelligence that we had up to the point when those very dramatic photographs revealed the presence of missiles was not really solid intelligence. We had lots of reports from informers, mysterious-looking large objects would be hauled through the streets at nights, and things of this kind.

F: It was difficult to gauge--

M: Exactly how big they were. Sometimes there were delays in the transmission of this information, because sometimes the information would have to go to Mexico. Then, there were delays in getting that information through. Some of it had to find its way by way of a traveler going to Mexico and coming out. There wasn't a great deal of instant communication because of the restraints of travel and communication and so forth. So we didn't have the hard information that a constant aerial surveillance would have revealed.

It happened that during the month of September I was away until the 25th or 26th of September. I found that during my absence--I was on a wedding trip incidentally--surveillance had come to a stop. I insisted upon its resumption. Then there was a delay of a week or ten days for two reasons: One, bad weather--there was a tropical storm that swept through that made U-2 photography impossible--and secondly, a fear that if a U-2 plane operated by a civilian pilot from the CIA was shot down, it would create one kind of a problem. If operated by the military, it would be a different problem. Therefore the decision was made to transfer the surveillance responsibility over to the Air Force, and this took several days to check out the pilots and familiarize them with the equipment which was very complicated.

F: These were the same type missiles that had shot down Gary Powers over Russia?

M: That's right. And you'll recall one plane was shot down over Cuba. But in any event, these things cleared up so that a flight was flown on October 10, I believe, or some time in early October--I've forgotten the exact date. When those pictures were developed and analyzed, there were the missiles. Now in some ways, it was providential that we didn't fly

the flight the week before because they might not have been there; and then it might not have been necessary--

F: Might have relaxed.

M: We might have relaxed a little bit. So it was just the right days.

So maybe God was good to us, causing these delays, which were very aggravating at the time. In any event, once the indisputable evidence was placed before the responsible people in government--not only in the Administration but in the Congress--it was apparent that action must be taken. I must say that a very, very fine job of tactics was followed by the Kennedy Administration.

F: Was there ever very serious consideration of the quid pro quo with Russia to give up our Turkey bases if they'd take the missiles back, or was this just talk?

M: I think that was just talk.

F: Didn't get beyond that stage really.

M: Nobody ever thought the missiles in Turkey were worth anything anyway--or those in Italy either. They never should have been put there in the first place. I opposed them. I wanted them taken out a couple of years before.

F: What do you do--get a sort of mentality where once you get an installation you just feel you have to defend it?

M: I have my own personal opinion of why those were put in, and I don't think I should express them, because they're just opinions. Sometimes, you know, when you spend a few billion dollars developing something, you've got to do something with it.

F: Did Vice President Johnson take any active part in these deliberations?

I know he met with the National Security Council during this missile

crisis. Or did he stay pretty much in the background?

M: In the first place, I saw to it that he was informed. I briefed him personally so that he knew what was going on. We developed our policy through an Executive Committee that President Kennedy established. That committee met practically day and night for days, as you know. Vice President Johnson appeared with that committee and on one or perhaps two occasions, expressed his views--and of course was tremendously concerned. The records of that committee, which I presume are available to you, revealed his position. But his position was a strong one.

F: There was no contention between him and other members of the committee? I'm thinking particularly of Bobby Kennedy.

M: Not that I know of, no.

F: Did you get the feeling that this blunted Castro's subversion in Latin America?

M: Unquestionably it weakened Castro's stature throughout Latin America. Whether it blunted his subversion efforts or whether other things did, I don't know.

F: But you think it did place him in a sort of puppet role?

M: It put him in a puppet role. It had very serious consequences on him.

F: Did the fact that Mexico refused to go along with the quarantine of Cuba give you any great problems? Or did it actually open up a listening post?

M: I, personally, wasn't concerned. There were people in the Administration who were very disappointed that Mexico would not go along, but in fact there were some pluses as well as minuses. You mentioned one; it did give a listening post that proved valuable.

F: What were other pluses?